

## Health support for doctors

Doctors may at times have health issues which require medical advice. All practitioners and medical students should have their own general practitioner. They should not dismiss their own symptoms and should consult their general practitioner if they are unwell.

The NZMA developed a position statement on Doctors health and wellbeing in 2013. A copy of the statement can be viewed on our website at: <http://nzma.org.nz/sites/all/files/pos-health-and-wellbeing.pdf>.

This resource sets out what is available to doctors should they suffer ill health.

### **MAS/MPS**

Several years ago, MPS and MAS established a confidential free support service for medical practitioners. They offer counseling services for doctors suffering from stress. This service can be contacted on 0800 225 5677.

### **Medical Council Health Committee**

The Medical Council is responsible for protecting the health and safety of the public under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCAA). The Council manages doctors with conditions affecting their fitness to practise medicine. Under the HPCAA it is mandatory for doctors to notify the Council if their own fitness or that of a colleague's is in doubt. Doctors may feel inhibited from approaching the Committee, which must take a formal regulatory approach to health issues. This in turn limits the Committee's ability to provide services and support to doctors.

### **Medical Colleges**

The following Colleges have advised us that they offer access to peer support and/or health advisory services to their members:

#### The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners:

The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners (RNZCGP) has a resource for members called "*Self Care for General Practitioners.*" The resource focuses on prevention, how doctors can self care and the need for doctors to develop a personal support network. For doctors who are suffering from stress or other health issues they can phone the College for advice on 0800 769 247.

#### Royal Australasian College of Surgeons:

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) operates a support service for RACS members experiencing stress. This is a confidential service. Surgeons in the support service come from each of the College's sub specialties. The College can be contacted on 04 385 8247

#### Australia and New Zealand College of Anesthetists:

The Australia and New Zealand College of Anesthetists (ANZCA) has a 'Welfare of Anaesthetists' Special Interest Group. The group was created to promote the importance of

doctors' physical and mental well-being. Details on this group and resource documents can be found at the following link on the College website:

<http://www.anzca.edu.au/fellows/sig/welfare/introduction.html>

As well as this special interest group, the College Directors of Professional Affairs are available to give advice and support to ANZCA Fellows and trainees.

### **Employer Services**

Some DHBs/hospitals provide access to health advice and services to their employees. Information on these services can be obtained through the DHB.

### **NZMA**

The NZMA Chair or Deputy are also available to take a confidential call from any NZMA member who needs personal advice or has concerns about a colleague. Contact the NZMA National Office on 0800 656 161.

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## **Need more help?**

Contact the NZMA:

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